

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 3, 2009

The Honorable Alan B. Mollohan
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, and Science
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Frank Wolf
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, and Science
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Mollohan and Ranking Member Wolf:

We are writing to urge you to appropriate no less than \$80 million to the National Marine Sanctuary Office in Fiscal Year 2010. Over the past four years, a combination of funding decreases and level-funding have resulted in cutbacks to key programs, operations, and construction efforts across the National Marine Sanctuary System. This recommendation would restore ONMS to a more suitable level of operation and allow it to sustain the great strides being made in our sanctuaries.

The National Marine Sanctuary system reflects the country's commitment to protecting special marine places. Reports by the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and the Pew Oceans Commission highlighted the need to make greater investments in the country's ocean management priorities, including national marine sanctuaries.


The National Marine Sanctuary System serves as the trustee for 13 sanctuaries and one Marine National Monument. National Marine Sanctuaries contain deep ocean gardens, near-shore coral reefs, whale migration corridors, deep-sea canyons, and underwater archeological sites. They range in size from Fagatele Bay's one-quarter square mile in American Samoa, to over 5,300 square miles in Monterey Bay, California. Together, these Sanctuaries and the Monument protect nearly 150,000 square miles of coastal and open ocean waters, including countless species of wildlife and their habitats, while allowing compatible commercial and recreational activities.

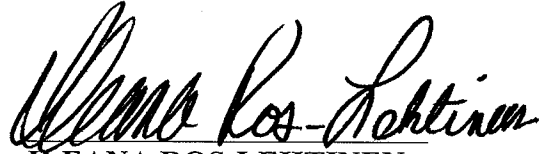
National Marine Sanctuaries also promote scientific research and exploration, and they foster our important maritime cultural legacy through community outreach, public-private partnerships and educational programs. And, as economic engines for many coastal communities, National Marine Sanctuaries support our travel and tourism industry and they ensure long-term sustainable use of our ocean resources. Increased funding would create jobs, expand research, improve management and enforcement, construct visitor centers, and augment education outreach and activities.


Despite the many benefits the National Marine Sanctuary system provide, shifts in funding priorities in recent years have led to substantial cuts in this key NOAA program. Therefore, to

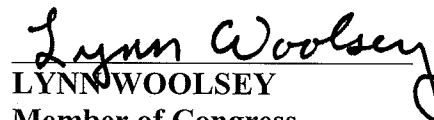
enhance and sustain the effectiveness of the National Marine Sanctuary system, we strongly urge you to increase funding for this worthwhile program to \$80 million. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

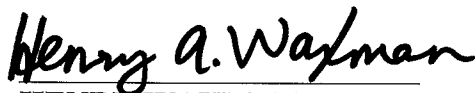
Sincerely,


LOIS CAPPS
Member of Congress

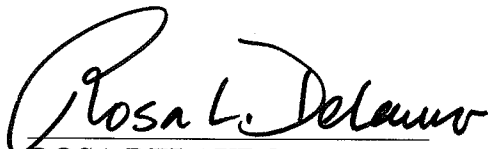

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Member of Congress



LYNN WOOLSEY
Member of Congress

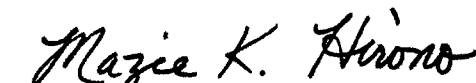

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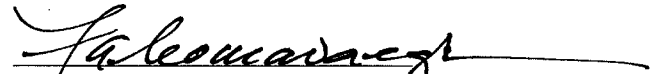
DONNA CHRISTENSEN
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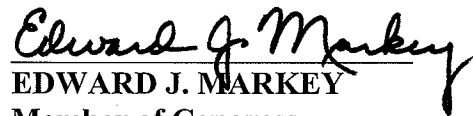
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